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REPORT OF

CONFERENCES WITH AMBASSADOR MENSHIKOV

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CONFERENCE WITH AMBASSADOR MENSHIKOV, NOVEMBER 28, 1960, AT
575 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

Menshikov advised me that he had informed Khrushchev of our previous conversation and had received a long further message which he proceeded to translate from voluminous notes in Russian. A tight condensation follows.

Desiring to begin an exchange of opinions, Mr. Khrushchev wishes to outline some views of the Soviet on questions touched upon at our last talk.

I. DISARMAMENT

Mr. Khrushchev agrees with all those who consider this the most important problem. It should be settled without delay. Peace or war depends on how this can be peacefully solved.

Since an atmosphere of confidence does not exist between our countries Mr. Khrushchev believes that we should not sit passively by, but should roll up our sleeves and attack the problems -- remembering that measures toward disarmament will help disperse suspicions.

He says that the U.S.S.R. wishes to find a "way out of this stalemate". When the development of such destructive weapons has reached such unprecedented levels, general and complete disarmament is the only way out. Experience shows that a partial approach complicates achievement of agreement, and partial measures mean maintaining the war potential.

Partial measures do not settle the main problem or eliminate the threat of war.

So agreement on general and complete disarmament is the only way to end production of fissionable materials.

The United States proposal of ending production of fissionable materials makes sense only if nuclear weapons are simultaneously destroyed and their future use prohibited.

Khrushchev says that if we are serious about disarmament and the danger of nuclear war, we must take the following steps:

- 1) Stop production.
- 2) Prohibit use.
- 3) Destroy nuclear weapons, so that fissionable materials can only be used for peaceful purposes.

However, he says, the U.S.S.R. is not against partial steps where they contribute to ultimate disarmament, noting, by way of example, the reduction of the armed forces by the U.S.S.R. and the fact that the U.S.S.R. has insisted that all testing and development be stopped.

Negotiations on the test ban convince Khrushchev that the United States is to blame for no agreement. We have, he says, kept open the possibility of further tests in order to gain an advantage in the control system. He thinks that the United States, by threatening resumption of tests, is trying to force the U.S.S.R. to make concessions and conclude a treaty which will be favorable to Western arms and intelligence services while the arms race goes on.

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The U.S.S.R., Khrushchev says, cannot agree to an unequal position damaging its security.

So he feels it is necessary to begin by working out basic principles of general and complete disarmament. The views of the U.S.S.R. were put forth at the recent General Assembly. The U.S.S.R., Khrushchev says, is not seeking unilateral advantages but is striving to reach acceptable agreements and is ready to consider any constructive proposals.

Khrushchev repeats that if the West will agree to general and complete disarmament, then the U.S.S.R. will accept any control and inspection worked out by the West. However, it is obvious, he says, that on every phase of disarmament controls should be established to correspond to the needs.

The U.S.S.R. proposes a special session of the General Assembly in March or April on disarmament alone. Khrushchev argues that such a meeting "will contribute to the mutual trust which is so indispensable". However, he says, it will not be possible to work out details but only the main principles of a treaty and assign the details to a committee on disarmament. He believes that the present committee should be enlarged to include five neutral nations and should be charged with working out a treaty on general and complete disarmament pursuant to the "foundations, terms of reference or directives" of the General Assembly.

He concludes by saying that it is important that neutral states participate in great international issues.

II. GERMANY AND BERLIN

Khrushchev contends that the only practical way to liquidate tension and stabilize the situation in Europe is by concluding peace treaties with the two German states.

But, he says, if the United States is not ready to recognize East Germany it would be acceptable for each country to decide whether to sign one treaty or two treaties. The U.S.S.R. is prepared to sign two treaties.

The essence of the peace treaties, Khrushchev says, is recognition of the "unalterability" of the present boundaries of Germany and the existence of two German states. He insists that any peace treaty must also solve the question of West Berlin.

In West Berlin, he says, the U.S.S.R. proposes to make de jure what already exists de facto. Thereby, Khrushchev concludes, nobody loses anything, and no one gains at the expense of the other side. At the same time, he argues that such a settlement would improve relations, and would remove mistrust and suspicion in Europe about West Germany.

Khrushchev says that, if the United States does not like the Soviet draft of a peace treaty, the U.S.S.R. is ready to discuss an American draft. Possibly we have proposals of our own concerning the treaty. The Soviet Union is convinced that a "common language" can be found on every provision, assuming there is no question about German boundaries.

Khrushchev contends that the abnormality of the situation in West Berlin is recognized by everybody. It would be "incorrect to complicate the question by any groundless talk about joining West Berlin with West Germany because the U.S.S.R. does not consider West Berlin a part of West Germany" (this seemed to be a reference to the corridor proposal). Khrushchev dismissed the idea of treating East and West Berlin as a single city by saying that it would be "incorrect to introduce the question of East Berlin because it is an organic part and capital of East Germany". "The U.S.S.R. thinks the proposal to transform West Berlin into a free city is the best solution because it gives due regard to the protection and freedom of citizens of West Berlin. We do not propose to change the social and economic order in West Berlin or its close ties with West Germany".

He argues that West Berlin should not (a) permit subversive activities and hostile propaganda against East Germany and other Socialist countries, and (b) participate in blocs of a military-political nature.

He says that the United Nations and the four powers should give "wide and efficient guarantees not to interfere with the free city and its ties with the outside world".

Taking into account considerations of prestige, Khrushchev suggests that perhaps there should be a transition period before a final decision is reached on the creation of a free city. This transition period might take the form of a temporary

agreement for a strictly limited time. He says this is subject to discussion.

Khrushchev also wants to emphasize the unstable situation in West Berlin where life depends on the relations of the four powers and on the relations between the two Germanys. "For instance, a breach of the trade agreement by West Germany would provoke retaliatory measures which would be grounds for banning shipments from or to the Federal Republic. Such justified and logical measures would affect West Berlin also. This example shows how ripe the time is to work out a new status for West Berlin."

III. COLONIALISM

The U.S.S.R. argues that the colonial system has outlived itself but that the process of liberation has not been completed.

Khrushchev contends that the U.S.S.R. is not seeking any advantage in this connection. "All we are doing is to help these countries get and keep their independence. We call upon the United States to do likewise".

"You know these countries need scientific, economic and technical assistance and do not want to be the arena of sharp conflict between the great powers for spheres of influence. We believe our two countries could help to normalize relations in these regions".

At the conclusion of our talk Mr. Menshikov asked for my comments and I reported that the repetition of their views about Berlin was not encouraging. I added that the talk about ending colonialism was of course propaganda as it had virtually ended already.

Ambassador Menshikov asked if he could see me again during the evening to continue our talk. When I said it was impossible he said he would wait over to see me the next day.

A.E.S.

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Mr. Menshikov asked for my reflections on Mr. Khrushchev's message. We had a rather fruitless talk about Khrushchev's insistence that the Western powers agree to "general and complete disarmament" first before discussion of the phases and details of disarmament and control.

Menshikov quoted Khrushchev as saying: "If the Western powers agree to carry out general and complete disarmament, the Soviet Union is ready to accept Western proposals on international control. If a decision is taken on total and universal disarmament and on the destruction of weapons, we shall be ready to accept any controls. Let the Western countries prepare the proposals, we will accept them * * * any proposals they wish to submit. But if the West insists on control and inspection first, then we think that its objective is not disarmament but intelligence -- to find out what the Soviet Union has".

After some discussion of the meaning of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations on general and complete disarmament he urged that Khrushchev's proposals at the U.N. this fall be compared with the United States proposals at Geneva last summer. He said that would disclose "great differences" because there had been no agreement by the West to the basic principle of general and complete disarmament.

A.E.S.